AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to empirically test the relationship between organizational climate and organizational citizenship behavior. 139 respondents successfully completed a valid, reliable questionnaire from the commercial banking sector of Lebanon in the Middle East. Findings indicate that organizational climates have an effect on organizational citizenship behaviors. Results also identified which climates affect which citizenship behaviors.

Keywords: *Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), Organizational climate, Bank Employees*

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's organizational world characterized by expectation of higher work productivity, it is not surprising that organizations are in need of employees who go beyond their call of duty and give job performances that exceed expectations, i.e. engage in organizational citizenship behavior. However, in order to encourage these desired outcomes, management should focus on certain environmental determinants that can influence and support such behaviors. One such factor is organization climate which is defined by Stringer (2002, p. 9) as "the collection and patterns of the environmental determinates of aroused motivation."

Previous research has indicated that employees who work outside the organizational setting (e.g. salespeople) are less supervised and are therefore more physically, socially, and psychologically separated from the organization than those working within it (see, for example Dunkinsky et al., 1986). Thus, the researchers infer that bank employees who typically work within the organizational setting and are closely supervised are physically, socially, and psychologically less separated from the organization than those working outside it. Hence the ability of the organizational climate to influence this group's behavior becomes more essential. The present study examines the relationship between organizational climate and organizational citizenship behavior among bank employees in a non-western culture.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

There has been considerable interest in the concept of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Organ (1988, p. 4) defined it as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization." This definition has prompted much criticism. For example, researchers argued whether or not OCBs were discretionary in nature, and whether these behaviors lead directly or indirectly to rewards. Thus, Organ (1997, p. 95) suggested OCB be redefined as "performance that supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place."

Since then, other terms have emerged to describe this concept such as organizational spontaneity (Podsakoff et al., 2000), extra-role behavior (Van Dyne & LePine 1998), going the extra mile (Turnipseed & Rassuli, 2005), etc. Examples of such behaviors include "such gestures as constructive statements about the department, expression of personal interest in the work of others, suggestions for improvement and training new people, respect for the spirit as well as the letter of housekeeping rules, care for organizational property, and punctuality and attendance well beyond standard of enforceable levels" (Organ, 1990, p. 46). In sum, no matter the term used, it is agreed that employees who engage in such behavior do it on a voluntary basis without expecting compensation.

Organ (1988) proposes that citizenship behavior can be exhibited in different ways: (a) altruism, defined as discretely helpful behavior toward someone who is experiencing an organizational problem, (b) conscientiousness, behavior that exceeds the minimum required of a person's expected role in the organization. These two differ in that altruism is more personal while contentiousness is aimed more at the entire organization like a group or department. (c) sportsmanship, which refers to an employee's tolerance such as withholding complaint in inconvenient situations or less than ideal organizational circumstances, (d) courtesy, which refers to preventative behavior that helps avoid problems, rather than dealing with existing problems, (e) civic virtue, behavior involving the employee's concern and participation in organizational matters, such as speaking up about organization related issues, attending meetings, and defending the organization's policies and practices when challenged by outsiders and finally (f) generalized compliance, doing things right for the sake of the organization or the system "good soldier" syndrome.

Research on OCB has shown that it has an impact on organizational outcome and organizational effectiveness (Walz and Niehoff, 1996, Podsakoff et al., 1997, 2000). Its effect on effectiveness is mixed. Positively, it has been shown to foster a more open and trusting environment. As such, it promotes the efficient and effective functioning of an organization (see for example, Walz and Niehoff, 1996, Podsakoff et al., 1997, 2000). On the other hand, some have found it to have a negative impact such as in the form of reducing voice (Choi, 2007), reducing engagement in job prescriptions (Bolino et al., 2004), (see for example, Podsakoff and Mackenzie, 1994). These differences could be the result of other variables influencing OCBs.

3. ORGANIZATION CLIMATE

Litwin and Stringer (1968, p.1) viewed organizational climate as "a set of measurable properties of the work environment, perceived directly or indirectly by people who live and work in this environment and assumed to influence their motivation and behavior." Interest in the study of organizational climate was renewed in the early seventies (see for example Pritchard and Karasick, 1973; James and Jones, 1974; Schneider and Snyder, 1975) and still draws interest (see for example, Davidson, 2003; Chen et al., 2004; Wasko and Faraj, 2005;Giacomo and Carla, 2011; Vashidi et al., 2012). Organization Climate is theorized as a psychological tool for focusing on the individual and striving to understand the cognitive developments and behaviors (Davidson, 2003). Thus, it can be used as a management technique to understand how employees view their working environment.

Organizational climate has positively been linked to many behavioral outcomes such as commitment and job satisfaction (Bhaesajsanguan, 2010; Castro and Martins, 2010), employee behaviors and outcomes (Ferris et al., 1998), leadership behaviors, job performance, productivity, and quality of work group interaction (El-Kassar & Messarra 2010; Laschinger, 2001; Goleman, 2000; Schnake, 1983; Pritchard and Karasick, 1973; Friedlander and Greenberg, 1971).

The main organizational climates that have been identified (see for example Stringer, 2002; Litwin and Stringer, 1968) are: Structure (being well-organized and having clearly defined roles and responsibilities), responsibility (encouragement of individual judgment and discretion, whereby employees are made to feel that they are "their own boss"), risk (willingness to take chances on employees' ideas), reward (rewarding positive performance in that it outweighs punishment in the organization), warmth and support (warm relationships among employees supported by a relaxed and people-oriented atmosphere), conflict (avoiding arguments and disagreements by maintaining good interpersonal relations), and expect approval (pride and loyalty toward the organization and work group).

4. ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

It is not easy for organizations to predict what they can do to influence OCB. However, according to Pitchard (1973) and Steers (1997), organizational climate can be delineated as a leading feature of the internal organizational environment that can exert pressure to direct the activities and behaviors of employees. Stringer (2002) also concluded from his work that different organizational climates can arouse different kinds of motivation.

A study by Organ and Ryan (1995) reviewed 55 studies on the antecedents of OCB and found that attitudinal measures of leader supportiveness, organizational commitment, perceived fairness, and satisfaction, all correlated well with OCB however, the dispositional measures did not correlate as well.

Cheng and Chiu (2008) examined the effects of supervisor support on OCB in seven companies in Taiwan using matched questionnaires between subordinates and supervisors. Results indicated that supervisor support influenced employees' commitment and person-organization fit which in turn enhanced the level of OCB. The researchers also reported other results from the same data collected a year later indicating a positive relation between OCB and the job characteristics autonomy, task significance, and task identity (Cheng and Chiu, 2009). Thus we can conclude that supervisor support and job design can positively affect OCB levels.

On the other hand, Babcock-Roberson and Strickland (2010) surveyed undergraduate students from a large Western University in the US with current employment for at least six months and found that charismatic leadership and employee engagement both had a positive relationship with OCB. Also Gilbert, Laschinger, and Leiter (2010) examined the effect of empowerment on
OCB and found them to be positively related with emotional exhaustion as a mediator.

From the above, the researchers predict that OC can motivate and direct the activities and behaviors of employees to affect OCB.

5. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on a questionnaire constituting of three parts: organizational citizenship behavior, organizational climate and Demographics. To measure organizational citizenship behavior, a questionnaire, which is based on the study by Organ (1988) and developed by Podsakoff & MacKenzie (1989), was used. It is a 20 item scale that makes up the five dimensions of OCB i.e. Compliance (5 items), Courtesy (4 items), Altruism (3 items), Civic Virtue (4 items), and Sportsmanship (4 items). Nevertheless, the researchers will stress on the first four dimensions only. These four dimensions will represent the dependent variables.
The questions relating to the organizational climate developed by Litwin & Stringer (1968) has seven sets of statements corresponding to seven organizational climates i.e. Responsibility, Reward, Warmth & Support, Structure, Risk, Conflict, and Expect Approval. However, for the purpose of this research, we will only survey the first three climates, which will represent the independent variables. All responses to the organizational climate and the OCB items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly agree (S/A) to5 strongly disagree (S/D).
The study was conducted at the beginning of 2011 in the commercial banking sector of Lebanon in the Middle East. A 39-item questionnaire was administered and successfully completed by 139 respondents. The respondents' gender was almost equally distributed (see Figure 1). The respondents' age was mainly young with 50.4% between 20-29 years old (see Figure 2) a mean of 1.63, and a standard deviation of 0.715. The majority had a university level education (see Figure 3), which reflects the trend to hire specialized employees. The respondents have almost equal years of experience with the same bank (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 1 – GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

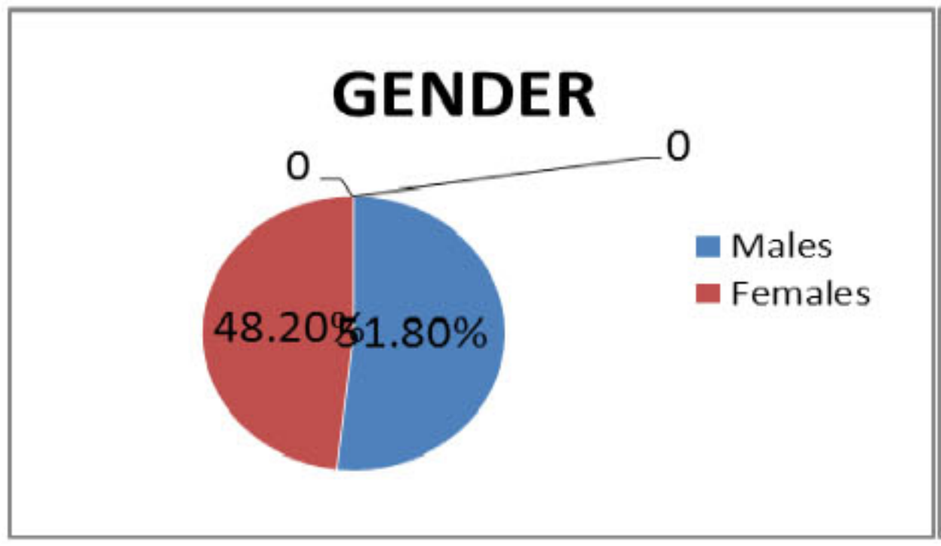


FIGURE 2 – AGE OF RESPONDENTS

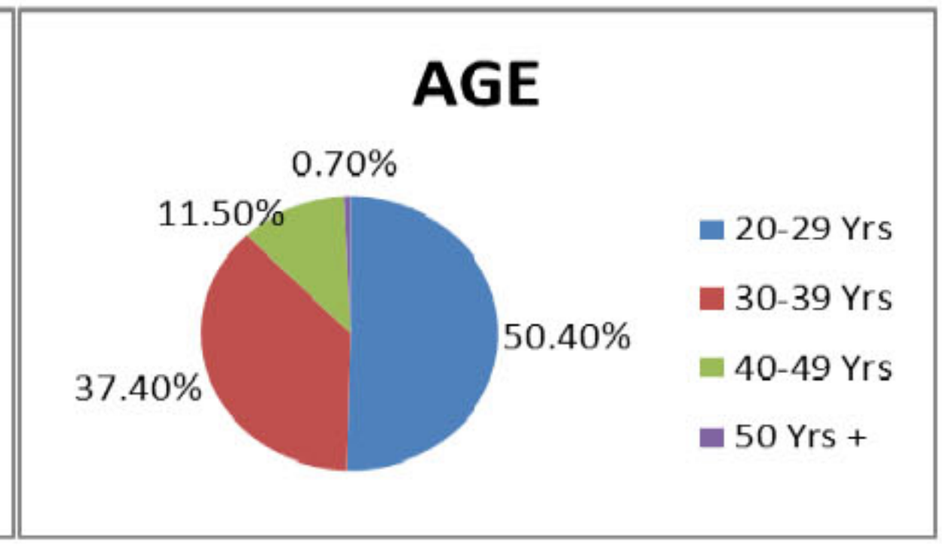


FIGURE 3 – EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS

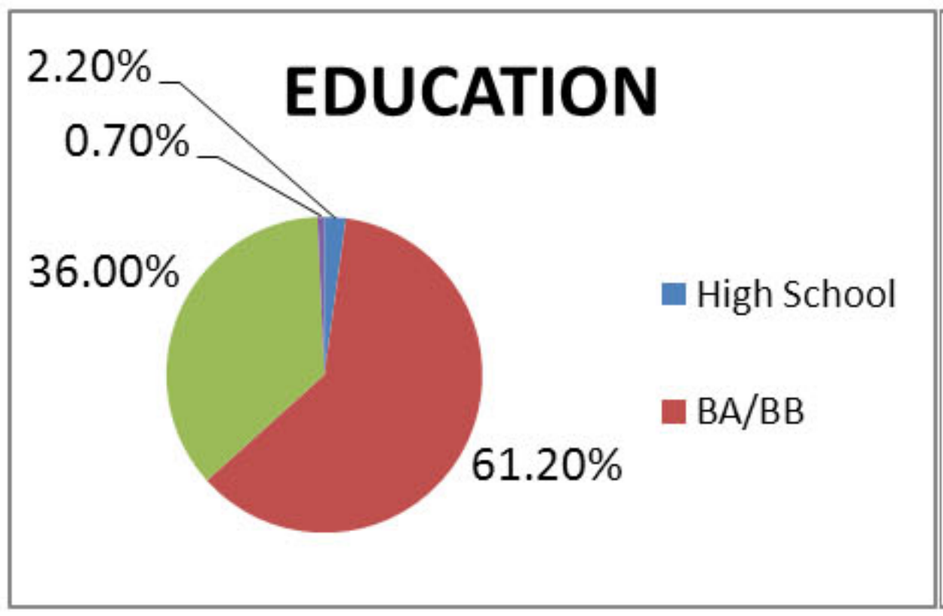
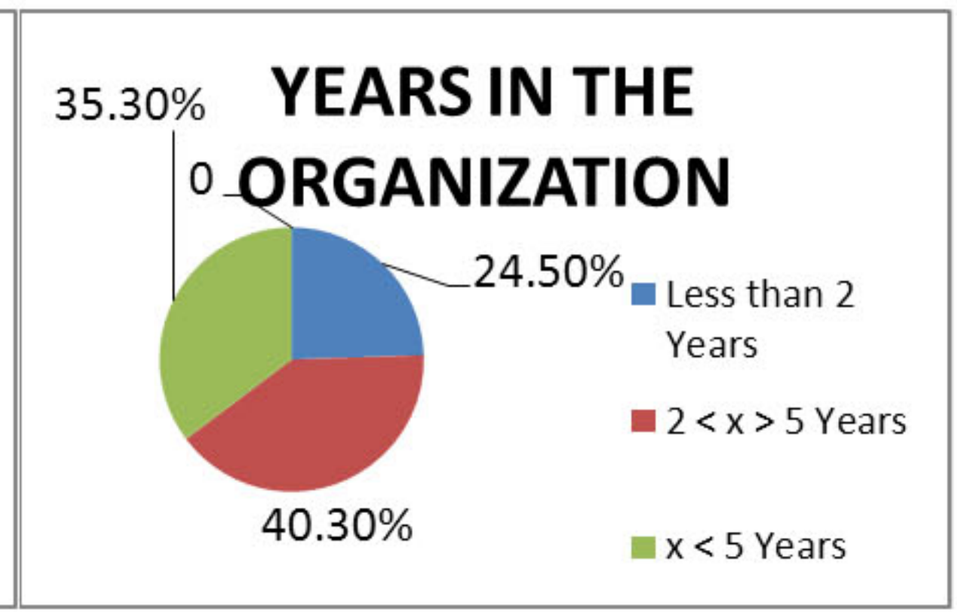


FIGURE 4 – YEARS IN THE ORG.



The researchers used the SPSS statistical software to analyze the collected data and Excel to organize results and generate the graphs and tables. The tests performed include instrument reliability, factor analysis, regression analysis, and correlation tests.

6. RESULTS

6.1 Factor Analysis

The factor analysis test was performed using the Principal Component Analysis extraction method. Results show a high KMO ranging between 67.9% and 82.8%, at p=.000 (see Table 1), therefore the factor analysis is considered appropriate.

TABLE 1 – FACTOR ANALYSIS

Group	Factor	Symbol	KMO	Sig	Decision
Group 1	Courtesy	CRT	.802	.000	Accept
Group 2	Altruism	ALT	.828	.000	Accept
Group 3	Civic Virtue	CVR	.722	.000	Accept
Group 4	Compliance	CMP	.791	.000	Accept
Group 5	Responsibility	RSP	.720	.000	Accept
Group 6	Reward	RWD	.701	.000	Accept
Group 7	Warmth and Support	WS	.679	.000	Accept
Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis; Confidence 95%					

6.2 Internal Consistency Reliability

The internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire was tested and proved to be strong with the standardized item alpha ranging from the lowest of 65.6% for group 7 (warmth and support), to the highest being 86.7% for group 4 (compliance), and courtesy alpha=0.862, altruism alpha=0.822, civic virtue alpha=0.824, responsibility alpha=0.729, and reward alpha=0.726.

6.3 Overall Results

The overall results after analyzing the research data reveals that courtesy among employees is high with an average mean of 1.77 on a scale of 1 to 5, and a standard deviation averaging 0.966. Also altruism is high among respondents, with an average of 1.588 and an average standard deviation of 0.6936, showing that respondents put effort into avoiding conflict and resolving problem, and show a high level of civic virtue (Ave. Mean=1.743, Ave StDv=.816). Moreover, the respondents' compliance level is high on issues relating to their jobs such as business meetings, and of less impact on issues relating to the general organizational environment such as functions and unnecessary activities.

As for the respondents' feeling of responsibility, the results show that the level of personal initiative and judgment are limited for the benefit of institutionalized processes and procedures. Moreover, the reward system in place and warmth and support scored lower with an average mean of 2.641 and 2.634, and an average standard deviation of 1.0187 and 0.962 respectively.

6.4 Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis of the data was performed using SPSS. The data results show a number of significant correlations at 99% confidence (two tailed), although no significantly important correlation is found with either of the demographic variables of gender, age, educational level attained, or with the number of years spent in the organization.

The results of the correlation between the different factors of organizational climate and organizational citizenship behavior are summarized in table 1. The results show a positive correlation between ***Responsibility*** and ***Compliance*** (.544 at .01 significance, two tailed); and that ***Reward*** is positively correlated with ***Civic Virtue*** and ***Compliance***, .199 and .259 at a significance of .05 and .01 respectively (two tailed). Moreover, the correlation results show a clear positive relationship between ***Warmth and Support*** and the four elements of organizational climate tested, namely ***Courtesy*** (.200 at .05 Sig.), ***Altruism*** (.199 at .05 Sig.), ***Civic Virtue*** (.289 at .01 Sig.) and ***Compliance*** (.259 at .01 Sig.).

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation & Reliability Coefficient for the different types of OCB Behaviors

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Courtesy	8.84	3.933						
2 Altruism	7.94	2.687	.570**					
3 Civic Virtue	5.22	2.106	.394**	.571**				
4 Compliance	7.18	2.727	.332**	.444**	.544**			
5 Responsibility	14.83	3.882	.094	.077	.117	.187*		
6 Reward	23.78	5.137	.097	.057	.199*	.259**	.413**	
7 Warmth & Support	18.47	3.853	.200*	.199*	.289**	.253**	.245**	.648**

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (Two tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (Two tailed)

The results show that ***Responsibility*** is weakly positively correlated with ***Compliance*** while the researchers expected a higher level of correlation. Therefore further testing was done. A factor analysis of the items used to measure ***Responsibility*** was performed. The results of the Rotated Component Matrix show the presence of two sub-sets. The first composed of the first 3 questions and labeled ***Judgment*** and the second of the remaining 3 questions and labeled ***Getting Ahead*** (see Table 2).

The two sub-factors were tested for correlation with ***Organizational climate***, and the results show a moderately high correlation between ***Judgment*** and ***Compliance*** (r= .285, Sig.=.001, at .01 level, two tailed); and no statistically significant correlation between ***Getting Ahead*** and any of the climate factors.

To further analyze the impact of organizational climate on citizenship behavior, the researchers performed a factor analysis for the factor ***Warmth and Support***. The results of the Component Matrix show that the seven test items used for assessing this factor were split into two groups. The first group named ***Friendliness*** includes questions 1, 3, 4, and 7; and the second group named ***Non-supportive*** and includes questions 2, 5 and 6 (see Table 3).

Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component	
	1	2
We don't rely too heavily on individual judgment in this organization; almost everything is double-checked		.721
Around here management resents your checking everything with them; if you think you got the right approach just go ahead	.197	.815
Supervision in this organization is mainly a matter of setting guidelines for your subordinates; you let them take responsibility for the job	.246	.702
There is not enough reward and recognition given in this organization for doing good work	.835	.116
You won't get ahead in this organization unless you stick your neck out and take a chance now and then	.866	
Our philosophy would emphasize that people should solve their problems by themselves	.627	.396

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

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Table 3: Component Matrix[a]

	Component	
	1	2
A very friendly atmosphere prevails among the people in this organization	.652	-.242
You wouldn't get much sympathy from higher-ups in this organization if you make a mistake	.140	.609
This organization is characterized by a relaxed, easy-going working climate	.773	-.246
You get quite a lot of support and encouragement for trying something new in this organization	.816	-.149
There is a good deal of disagreement, even some fighting, among various people in this organization	.310	.805
There is a great deal of criticism in this organization	.278	.720
The philosophy of our management emphasizes the human factor, how people feel, etc	.744	-.088

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
a. 2 components extracted

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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 2 components extracted

The researchers used the two separate groups for the factor ***Warmth and Support*** and reassessed the correlation of each of these factors with the factors of organizational climate and organizational citizenship behavior under study. The results of the correlation analysis reveal that ***Friendliness*** is positively correlated with ***Civic Virtue*** (r= .308 with Sig. 000, two tailed) and with ***Compliance*** (r= .274 with Sig. 001, two tailed), while ***Non-Supportive*** is not highly positively correlate with any of the factors of organizational climate. Moreover, the results of the correlation show that age is negatively correlated with all of the factors under study, with low significance.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to test the relationship between organizational climate and organizational citizenship behavior among commercial bank employees in a non-western culture. It also identified the organizational climates affecting organizational citizenship behaviors.

The results from the data collected showed no significant correlation between the organizational climate reward and any of the OCB's dimensions. This is contrary to past research by Podsakoff et al. (2009) who found OCB to have a positive relationship with performance ratings and reward allocations.

The organizational climate, Responsibility, was divided into two groups: Judgment and Getting Ahead. The first group strongly correlated with the OCB dimension Compliance; while the second group, Getting Ahead, did not correlate with any of the OCB dimensions.
Our results thus indicate that the climate Responsibility is partially related to only one OCB dimension while a study by Ebrahimpour et al. (2011) found a significant positive relationship between the overall climate Responsibility and OCB in general.

The organizational climate, Warmth and Support, was also divided into two groups: Friendliness and Non-Supportiveness. The first group moderately correlated with the OCB dimension Civic Virtue; while the second group, Non-Supportiveness, did not correlate with any of the OCBs. A study by Tierney, Bauer, and Potter (2002) in Mexico found that working relationships that are socially-based such as supervisor-employee and employee-employee relationships played an important role in enhancing employees' extra-role behavior. On the other hand, the organizational climates Structure, Risk, Conflict, and Expect Approval did not correlate with any of the OCB dimensions.

In conclusion, after empirically testing the relationship between OC and OCB based on reliable and valid questionnaires, our findings did indicate that organizational climate has an effect on organizational citizenship behaviors. The results also identified which organizational climates affect which organizational citizenship behaviors.

These results may have implications for policy makers when setting policies or developing training programs to help cultivate the proper climate or climates to ensure that the desired extra-role behavioral outcomes can be met.

8. LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. Although demographic factors were collected, no test was conducted to determine whether or not these factors intermediate the relationship between OC and OCB. Future studies could take these demographic factors into consideration. In addition, the sample was limited to commercial bank employees in Lebanon only, and therefore cannot be generalized. Further studies could sample employees across a variety of organizations and cultures to either confirm or extend the results of our study. Finally, our survey was limited to the climates stipulated by Litwin & Stringer (1968); Future research could look into other climates to study their effects on OCB.

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